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DEPARTMENT FOR PA, NEA/ARN, INR/IC/CD, INR/S:STHIBEAULT AND
JMCCARTER, VOA NEWS CA, NEA/PPD:CBURGEOIS, DBENZE AND
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SUBJECT: Damascus Media Reaction: Syria/Iran, Syria/Spain,
Lebanon, Al-Asad Speech, Iraq, Palestinian Territories (1/23)
11. Summary: Syrian papers today reported positive reactions in
Lebanon to President Asad's speech to the Federation of Arab
Lawyers citing statements by former Lebanese Minister Wadi Al-

Khazen, Kamal Shatila, President of the Lebanese People's
Congress, Al-Diyar newspaper, and Hasan Nasrallah of Hizbollah.
Papers also reported a speech by Hasan Nasrallah of Hizbollah
during a university graduation ceremony in Beirut in which he
said that "getting rid of Hizbollah is mere illusion" and that
"anyone who collaborates with the US scheme is Israeli and
Zionist."

The Hizbollah chief accused the majority of the Lebanese
government of not abiding by basic provisions of the ministerial
statement and called for the cabinet's resignation and for
formation of a national unity government.

Syrian papers also reported the visit to Damascus by Francisco
Javier Rojo Garcia, Speaker of the Spanish Senate, who underlined
the importance of Syrian-Spanish relations and reiterated the
importance of boosting cooperative ties between the two countries
and working to achieve peace and stability in the region and the
whole world.

End summary.

12. Selected Headlines:

"Positive reactions to President Asad's speech in the Lebanese
arena: Syria is the main guarantee for Arabs. Striking at Syrian-
Lebanese relations and the Lebanese resistance are US demands.
Nasrallah: Hizbollah is the banner of resistance, steadfastness,
sacrifice and liberation" (Government-owned Tishreen, 1/23)

"Lebanese political and media circles: President Asad's speech at
the Federation of Arab Lawyers expresses the opinion of loyal
Lebanese. Hasan Nasrallah, Secretary General of Hizbollah: Those
who conspire against Hizbollah will regret it" (Government-owned
Al-Thawra, 1/23)

"Nasrallah calls for cabinet resignation to break the impasse:
Getting rid of Hizbollah is mere illusion. Anyone who
collaborates with the US scheme is Israeli and Zionist"
(Government-owned Al-Ba'th, 1/23)

"Bkhitan, Regional Assistant Secretary of the Ba'th Arab

Socialist Party, receives a delegation representing the General Secretariat of the Arab National Conference and the Egyptian

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Committee for Afro-Asian Solidarity. Bkhitan: The current stage necessitates reactivation of joint Arab action" (Government-owned Tishreen, 1/23)

"The Federation of Arab Lawyers: A judicial board will be formed to defend Syria" (Government-owned Al-Thawra, 1/23)

"Speaker of the Spanish Senate, Francisco Javier Rojo Garcia, arrives in Damascus: "Enhancing cooperation and working to realize peace".

"Brammertz, Head of International Investigation Committee into killing of Hariri, meets Lebanese President" (Government-owned Al-Thawra, 1/23)

"Three Palestinians martyred before elections. Marwan al-Bargouthi launches an election campaign from his prison: A democratic intifada is our tool toward liberation" (Government-owned Tishreen, 1/23)

"Tehran reiterates call for dialogue and criticizes Chirac's statement: If Iran is to pay the price, Europe will pay it as well" (Government-owned Al-Ba'th, 1/23)

13. Editorial Block Quotes:

"A Very Important Visit"

Samir al-Shibani, an editorialist in government-owned Tishreen, wrote (1/23): "Iranian President Mahmud Ahmadinejad's visit to Syria has confirmed the righteousness and accuracy of Syria's options, for Syria has always been confident that Iran would only stand in Arab ranks and in the Arab trench, thus defending Arab rights and the Arabs' main issue, the Palestine question....

"The Syrian options have prevailed, the Syrian wager was correct. Meanwhile, the wager by those who fabricated a battle with Iran was wrong, because, according to all readings and

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Syrian papers also reported the visit to Damascus by Francisco Javier Rojo Garcia, Speaker of the Spanish Senate, who underlined the importance of Syrian-Spanish relations and reiterated the importance of boosting cooperative ties between the two countries and working to achieve peace and stability in the region and the whole world.

End summary.

analyses, it was a crazy battle that struck the Arabs and Iran in the heart, thus making them the two main losers....

"What stresses the success of the visit is the joint US-Israeli criticism of the visit, which only projects the significance of the visit and stresses the sincerity and clarity of the exemplary relations that bind Syria and Iran. Together, Syria and Iran represent the genuine front of resistance against all programs of elimination, division, and occupation...."

"Israel Is not Jumblatt's Enemy"

Ahmad Dawwa, an editorialist in government-owned Al-Thawra, wrote (1/23): "In his most recent televised statement, Walid Jumblatt, Leader of the Lebanese Progressive Socialist Party, did not conceal that Israel is not his enemy....

"Jumblatt is implementing specific instructions and guidance in harmony with the foreign plan that the Lebanese people are confronting stoutly....

"The confusion in Jumblatt's recent statement shows that he has become nothing but a media trumpet spreading poison and lies in

Lebanese society in implementation of orders from his masters....
"Jumblatt is involved in plans against Lebanon and the region....
He is misleading the investigation into the Al-Hariri
assassination by fabricating false testimony....
"Jumblatt can be expected to grow more vicious now that the truth
about his foreign connections has become more evident and it has
become impossible for him to return to his previous positions.
But his latest statements leave no room for doubt that his
accusations will backfire very soon."

"Sovereignty and Confused Concepts"

Dr. Fayez Sayegh, a columnist in government-owned Al-Thawra,
wrote (1/23): "As explained by President Asad, national
sovereignty is above all international laws and conventions....
"Syria will continue to cooperate with the international
community to identify the real perpetrator or perpetrators of the
assassination of Prime Minister Al-Hariri on the basis of
national sovereignty, to which we adhere, and the national
interest, in which we take pride and for the sake of which we
work, construct, and resist....
"Syria's interest does not conflict with the interest of a fair
and professional investigation...."
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